

REPORT TO: FAIR WORK, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE – 8 JANUARY 2024

REPORT ON: DUNDEE FOOD AND SUSTAINABILITY EVENT 2024

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 12-2024

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval for the development and delivery of a new event focused on food and sustainability.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a approves the proposed scoping document for the event in 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to this report; and
- b remits the Head of Planning and Economic Development to report back to Committee following the event in 2024, reflecting on the impact of the event and how it may develop and be resourced in future years.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The costs for delivery of the event in 2024 are £35,000 and will be met from the one-off Budget Investment Proposals 2023/2024 as agreed at the City Governance Committee on 23 October 2023. Future delivery of this event will require funding to be identified and will be subject to approval.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 At its meeting on 9 January 2023 the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to explore a new event focused on food and sustainability (Article VIII of the minute of meeting refers). A further report to the City Governance Committee on 23 October 2023 agreed financial support to explore this new event in 2024 (Article X of the minute of the meeting refers).

4.2 Dundee and its surrounding region has a renowned reputation for food and drink, located as it is in the fertile crescent of Scotland. It is proposed to celebrate this through the creation of a new festival focused on a sustainable food future. The event will seek to raise awareness of issues, challenges and opportunities in a fun and engaging way against a backdrop of good food and drink activities, whilst acting as a catalyst for debate and education.

4.3 Appendix 1 sets out proposals for the event in 2024, provisionally named the Dundee Food for Thought Festival. It proposes bringing together partners to create an initial toolkit and assets, test ideas and lay the groundwork for the event to evolve and grow in the future. It proposes to work with a range of partners such as the James Hutton Institute, Eat and Drink Dundee, Campy Growers, and the Eden Dundee project and build a strong network which can collaborate to deliver a vibrant, fun, interesting and informative events programme across multiple venues.

4.4 After the event in 2024, a review will be carried out to consider how the event might evolve in future and how this may be resourced. This will include working with DC Thomson who have indicated a desire to develop a food event in the city in 2025, with the potential for this to act as a further draw and attract visitors to the festival weekend.

4.5 The Dundee Food for Thought Festival (DFFTF) will bring together multiple strands including talks, activities, events, performance and promote them all in one festival web portal. This will

also include, where applicable, booking tickets. Participation at the event will be offered in a variety of ways to enable as many people as possible to be involved and create a festival buzz in the city centre that extends out into the wider city and region.

- 4.6 A working group will be established with key stakeholders invited to participate. This group will help steer the festival development and decide on key aspects, including the festival name. The intention is also to co-create through this group a charter for the event which all delivery partners in the festival events programme sign up to which requires sustainable practices to underpin the event's delivery.
- 4.7 The Council's role will be in pulling all the separate strands to the event together in a cohesive way, creating the overall event plans, leading the working group, seeking additional funding opportunities through sponsorship and Event Scotland, and delivering free elements and activities which add value and promote the city. Although led by City Development, support from Neighbourhood Services, given the nature of this event, will be required. In addition, support from Leisure and Culture will also be sought in relation to venues and promotion.
- 4.8 Subject to Committee approval, the event will be planned to take place on the last weekend in May 2024. This will make the Festival one of the first food-based events of the year in Scotland and fits well within the annual events calendar. The next step will be to seek formal commitment from key partners. It is proposed that the Festival in 2024 is modest in scale, with subsequent evaluation informing the planning and resourcing of future events.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate Senior Manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

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1 December 2023

APPENDIX 1

DUNDEE FOOD FOR THOUGHT FESTIVAL (PROVISIONAL NAME) FOOD AND SUSTAINABILITY 2024

SCOPING DOCUMENT

Introduction

This briefing proposes a new festival for Dundee focused on Food and Sustainability and showcasing the strengths of the city and the wider region. It creates an authentic event which reflects Dundee and will bring together a range of interested partners and activities into an exciting and innovative Festival Weekend. The proposed event for 2024 will be used to establish this new event with the potential for growth.

Outline Concept

Tayside region grows 82% of Scotland's fruit crop, 60% of the vegetable production, 37% of the wheat and 25% of the barley and oilseeds crops (Tay Cities Regional Tourism Strategy 2019-2024).

This rich local larder offers connections across the whole region, linking our people, culture, customs and landscapes through food and drink, its origin, preparation, presentation, and enjoyment.

Food provenance and sustainability actions are messages aligned to the city's aims. Dundee City Council, many Dundee businesses and individuals are committed to implementing sustainable practices in a bid to meet low carbon objectives.

The Festival will celebrate the city's fortunate geographic location; highlight innovative local food and drink businesses; promote local food heroes; increase opportunities for people to learn about food production; and showcase the range of community gardens, allotments, home growing networks, farmers, food insecurity networks, our foodbanks and community fridges. Other partners including the universities, Eden, V&A Dundee will also be invited to participate with their ideas, events, and activities.

The Festival will deliver a series of activities over the course of one weekend, focussed in the city centre but with fringe events across the whole city. It will be multi-venue and have both indoor and outdoor activity including lectures and talks, food walks and tasting trails, markets, street food, cooking demonstrations, children's activities and workshops.

The Festival will have key themes which will be agreed by the working group but could include:

- Dundee food and drink experiences;
- sustainable and healthy food;
- local producers of food and drink - showcasing this region's contribution to Scotland's food larder;
- community food growing projects;
- food security; and
- local food heroes activities - chefs/producers/businesses.

Initial Ideas for further development include:

- Food Trail around the city: Dundee has many independent restaurants, cafes, coffee shops and retailers, this will create a way for visitors to experience all that Dundee has to offer, i.e. special festival menus, tastings, promotions, or events;

- activities to encourage people to visit Dundee's eateries and spend their food-pounds with the independents;
- umbrella programme of activity delivered by others. This could include restaurants doing tastings, masterclasses in bakeries, cocktail making classes, foraging workshops and growing workshops. These would be branded and marketed to be part of the festival programme, but run independently;
- community events across the city, the aim of which is to bring people together around good food and encourage communities to eat well. Ideas to explore include cooking workshops, community allotment tours, open days at Mosques and Temples, local community festivals and pop-up suppers to help celebrate the best that the city has to offer;
- ReCity or similar event in City Square on one day of weekend. Farmers Market other day; and
- Eden Big Lunch.

A central website for the Festival will be created which all audience traffic will be directed to and this will act as the "virtual" hub with a range of events promoted and bookable through this.

The Festival will take place at a time in the calendar which has a gap for an event of this nature. The proposal is for the last weekend in May as this would then be one of the first food festivals of the year. Approaches will be made to potential sponsors to support the delivery of the Festival. Funding support will also be sought from EventScotland. Trade advertising banners and sponsorship of specific events will also be considered.

Delivery of the Festival will require cross-Council support and input from a range of partners.